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ENJOY EGG HUNTING WITHOUT THE RISK OF FOOD-BORNE ILLNESS

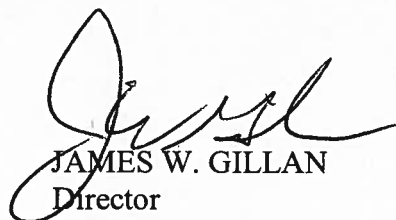
Easter eggs come in various forms and sizes. But just like raw meat, poultry, and fish, eggs can easily be a source of foodborne illness. To be safe, eggs must be safely handled, promptly refrigerated, and thoroughly cooked.

The Department of Public Health and Social Services promotes the use of plastic eggs instead of actual eggs during Easter Egg hunt activities to prevent the chance of food-borne illness to occur. If you decide to use real eggs, the following are safety recommendations that should be observed:

1. Always purchase eggs from a refrigerated case. Choose clean eggs, and make sure the shells are not cracked.
2. Prevent cross contamination; separate eggs from other foods in your grocery cart, grocery bags, and in the refrigerator. Keep the eggs in the coldest part of the refrigerator (45°F or below).
3. Prevent the spread of dirt and germs, wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before handling eggs at every preparation step, including cooking, cooling, dyeing, and hiding.
4. When you cook the eggs, make sure the water is hot (185°F-190°F) and simmer for at least a minimum of 12 minutes. Cool the eggs in cool water or simply air dry.
5. Keep hard-boiled Easter eggs refrigerated until just before the hunt if you won't be coloring them right after cooking and cooling. Hard-boiled eggs should be refrigerated within two hours of cooking and used within one week.
6. Do not hide eggs in places where they might come in contact with pets, wild animals, birds, or lawn chemicals.
7. Throw away Easter eggs which are cracked, dirty or soiled, and Easter eggs that have been kept out from the refrigerator for more than two hours.

Enjoy egg hunting without the risk of food-borne illness.

For more information, please call the Division of Environmental Health at 735-7221.



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